

Program

Community Media Forum
12th December 2003

Presentation: **Julienne Munyaneza, World Association for Christian Communication (WACC)**

9.00 Welcome Address

(Bread for All/Lenten Campaign)

9.10 Community Media and the WSIS

(Steve Buckley, President AMARC, Great Britain)

9.30 Media, Democracy and Cultural Diversity

(Regina Festa, ANDI News Agency, Brazil)

11.00 The Practice Inspires - Lessons Learnt from 30

Creative Latin American Community Radios

(Andres Geerts and Victor van Oeyen, ALER)

with Live Presentations by Radio Favela (Brazil) and Radio Los Cumiches (Nicaragua)

14.00 Community Media Legislation Roundtable

An International Expert Panel which will

- compare already existing experiences of national community media legislation;
- discuss future national and international community media legislation frameworks;
- reflect on further steps for the Second WSIS phase 2005.

15.30 Community Communication in Africa

- Community Radio Networking: experiences from Southern Africa
- Community Newspapers in Zimbabwe
- Community Television in DR Congo

16.30 Globalising Community Media

- Alternative Media Practice from Korea and Japan
- Community Television in the United States: Deep Dish TV Network
- European Radio Voices without Frontiers

Forum Partners:

Bread for all, www.bfa-ppp.ch

Swiss Catholic Lenten Fund, www.fastenopfer.ch

ALER (Latin American Association of Radio Education), www.aler.org.ec

AMARC (World Association of Community Radio Broadcasters), www.amarc.org

CAMECO (Catholic Media Council), www.cameco.org

WSIS Civil Society Community Media Caucus

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Palexpo, Geneva

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Community Media Forum



www.aler.org.ec

www.alc.amarc.org/legislaciones (Spanish)

www.ppp.ch/communication (French)

www.cameco.org (English)

Why a «Community Media Forum»?

«Millions of people in the poorest countries are still excluded from the «right to communicate», increasingly seen as a fundamental human right»

(Kofi Annan, UN Secretary General 17th May 2003)

The World Summit on the Information Society seems to leave out issues central to an information society that puts people first. Why do the poor apparently not exist in the mainstream media? Why are they not able to participate actively in the public sphere? Why do the media not reflect the cultural and linguistic diversity of peoples? Why do the media often fail to create a space for public discussion and common reflection of all stakeholders in society? And who owns information and knowledge?

The communication process – and not the technological achievements – should be at the core of any information society. Community Media are fundamental to creating a strong, socially responsible civil society as:

- They are driven by social objectives rather than by the private profit motive.
- They provide the means for cultural expression and community discussion. They supply news and information and facilitate political debate.
- Community Media empower people rather than treat them as consumers, and they nurture local knowledge rather than replace it with external solutions.
- Ownership and control of community media is rooted in, and responsible to the communities they serve.
- Community Media are committed to social justice, human rights, cultural identity and sustainable approaches to development.

Nevertheless, the growing importance of community media is not reflected at the World Summit on the Information Society.

What Happens at the «Community Media Forum»?

- Concrete examples from all over the world will show that Community Media are a powerful means of active community involvement and poverty reduction.
- Creative experiences of using cost-effective means to reach and connect the world's poorest communities will be presented.
- Concrete steps towards legal recognition of community media as equals to public service and commercial media will be discussed.

Our Demands:

1. Legalise Community Media!

States and international institutions have to guarantee access to production, distribution and consumption for all groups in society, strengthening rights to freedom of information and freedom of expression. Legislative reforms should assure radio frequencies for public and community broadcasting and for other civil society uses.

2. Give Them the Same Rights and Opportunities!

The future of community radio and television will depend on access to technical and financial resources. Affordable access to frequencies, channels and bandwidths and the adoption of appropriate technical standards is imperative. Community Media also must have access to sufficient financial resources whilst respecting and preserving their independence from government and commercial media corporations.

3. Help Community Media Grow!

Community Media – especially in poor countries – lack professional training, financial resources and networking. Public initiatives that support and promote community media at regional, national, and transnational levels should be devised and implemented – such as tax incentives, production funds etc.